

# Information on Covid-19

Monday, May 11th, 2020

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### — How can I ensure my employees remain healthy and safe and keep operations running?

The easing of lockdown restrictions implemented in each company from May 11th, onwards should lead employers to implement adequate preventive measures to ensure the health and safety of employees.

This is in the best interest of both employees and companies, as the presence of employees on-site will largely depend on their faith in the company's ability to address their concerns and protect them against any virus-related risk.

The Protocol published by the Ministry of Labour specifies that the easing of lockdown restrictions implemented in each company and establishment must lead, in order of priority, to:

- Avoid the risks of exposure to the virus;
- Assess the risks that cannot be avoided;
- Give priority to collective protection measures over individual protection measures.

The definition and implementation of all these measures require a prior evaluation, job by job by the employer, to ensure their practicability and their effectiveness ensure the protection of employees against the spread of the virus.

- **Teleworking** must remain wherever possible and is to be favoured for jobs that make it possible at least until June 2. The occasional or periodic physical presence of teleworkers on-site, when it is necessary, must be organised as to be spread out to limit the number of employees present at the company at the same time.

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#### How?

In a health crisis situation, **the agreement of the employee is not necessary, and no formalism is required.** A simple information of the employees by the employer is sufficient.

Vulnerable employees or employees no available childcare solution are either teleworking or placed on short-time working.

When employees' attendance is required, employers shall organize work in sequences and setup flexible hours in order to limit the risk of overcrowding and respect the social distancing rules.

In addition, employers shall provide for all rules related to the maximum number of persons allowed in an open space at once (gauge) and to flow management within the company.

Only when these actions are not enough to ensure the protection of employees' health and safety, they shall be completed, as a last resort, by individual protection measures like the use of mask.

**All business travel in France must be limited to the strict minimum required for professional activity.** As to travel beyond French borders, the closure of both the Schengen area and the external borders of the European Union implies postponement of all travel and strict compliance with the instructions issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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### — **Comment assurer la sécurité et la santé de mes salariés et la continuité de mon activité ?**

To promote effective takeover, the employer must ensure that one complies with the collective protection measures provided for in the Protocol and undertake the following actions:

#### **Step 1: Conducting a health risk assessment in the workplace:**

##### **How?**

**Employers shall assess the workplace to determine if hazards are present:** this means identifying the work situations in which transmission of the COVID-19 coronavirus may occur due to the conditions involved (particularly close contact) and assessing the risk of contagion within the company. .

In concrete terms, circumstances in which employees may be exposed to the virus must be reviewed and therefore employers are to implement the necessary measures to avoid or, failing that, to limit the risk as much as possible.

It is also important that employees are informed of the prevention measures to be enacted under the risk assessment reference document. The latter must be regularly updated.

**This process is carried out in conjunction with the employee representative committee (CSE) and the occupational health service.**

Sub-contractors working on company premises must be informed of any protective measures taken further to the adaptation of the prevention plans, which must also be updated.

#### **Step 2: Taking adequate preventive and protective measures**

In this respect, companies must take all necessary action to ensure the protection of the health of the personnel on-site, while enabling operations to continue, based on the following recommendations:

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- **Physical distancing rules and barriers:** handwashing at regular intervals, physical distancing (imperative health instructions), establishment of physical separation barriers and marking signs and areas on the ground;
- **Adapting premises** in terms of gauge per open space: universal criterion for maximum occupancy of spaces open to the public and in the workplace set at a minimum of 4m<sup>2</sup> per person, which should guarantee a minimum distance of 1 metre around a person;
- **People flow management:** creating traffic plans to ensure minimum physical distance, in small and cramped areas or in open spaces;
- **Individual protective equipment** (if the above measures cannot be implemented);
- **Screening tests:** broadcasting information health recommendations and encouraging employees to request tests in the event of symptoms;
- **Establishing an ad hoc procedure** for taking charge of an employee exhibiting symptoms and its close contacts in consultation with social partners;
- **Taking one's temperature:** recommended on an individual basis and possibility to allow for it in the company's internal bylaws, which must be transmitted to the CSE and later to the work inspection;
- **Deep-cleaning surfaces.**

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